

ABSTRACT

The present invention provides an e-mail communications system that minimizes the number of duplicate copies of common attachment files to e-mail communications that are stored in the mail store of an e-mail server. When the e-mail server receives an e-mail attachment file that is larger than a threshold size, the server performs a database search for another copy of the attachment file in the mail store. If another copy is located, the system creates a pointer in the mail store that associates the located attachment file with the e-mail for the additional recipient(s). Attachment files are deleted only after the recipients of the associated e-mail communications delete each of the respective e-mails.